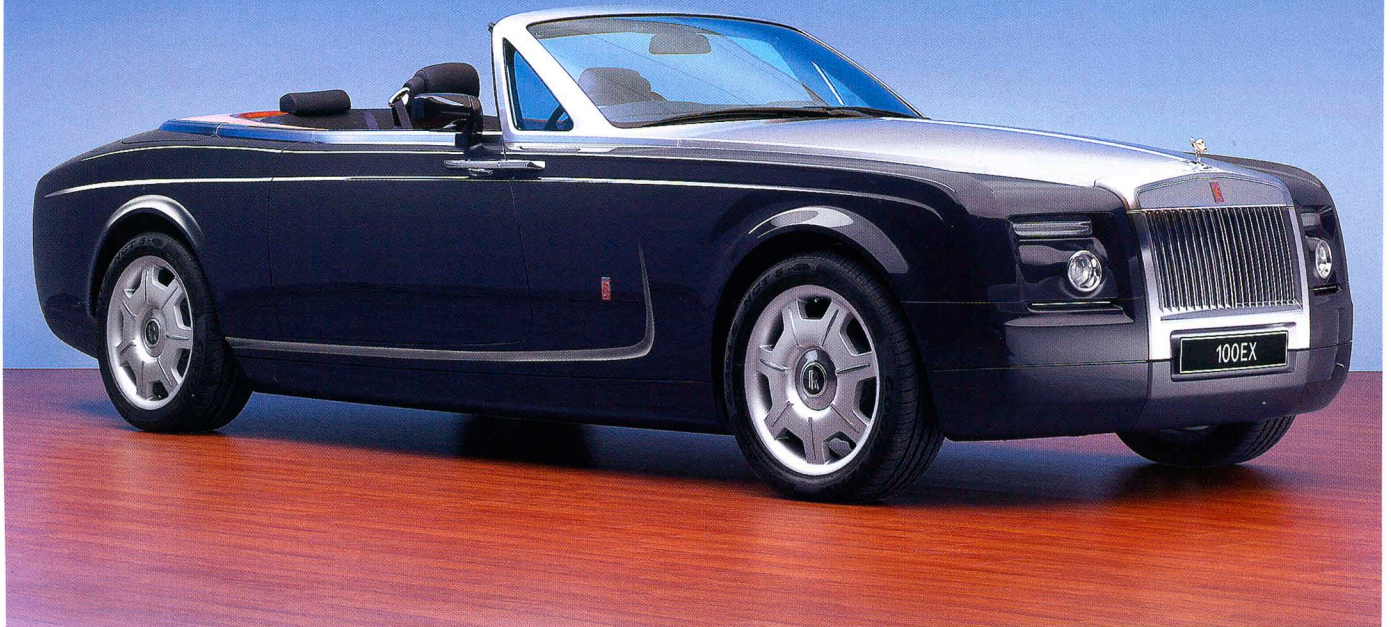


Best concept car

Rolls-Royce 100EX



The first 'experimental' Rolls-Royce for nearly 50 years, the 100EX centenary model purred quietly up the red carpet at this summer's Geneva Motor Show and sent the cognoscenti racing for their chequebooks. The styling team, led by Marek Djordjevic, imbued the two-door drop-top with a tremendous sense of occasion and elegance; if you thought they didn't make them like this any more, think again. Nearly 6m long, with a bonnet that stretches into the

distance, the 100EX is finished to perfection, a bespoke boulevard cruiser that takes its inspiration from yacht design, high technology and the company's own peerless heritage. The fit, finish and materials are all unimpeachable: teak, leather and a windscreen surround milled from a huge chunk of solid aluminium. Best of all, the 100EX has inspired a new convertible, code-named RR02, set to be launched in 2007. www.rolls-roycemotors.com



Joint runner-up: Fiat Trepuno

It seems that Fiat has condemned the Trepuno to become one of the industry's great what-ifs. Everything about the compact concept seemed perfect; it's a city car packed with style, innovation and true character. The world clamoured for a production version and Fiat backed out, strangely unwilling to commit to a design that had 'hit' written all over it. It's not all bad - the new Panda has won worldwide plaudits and helped restore Fiat's image as an expert in small car design. But we still think the Trepuno has potential, from its crisply detailed flanks to the iPod-inspired interior. You never know, it might still happen. www.fiat.com



Joint runner-up: Volvo YCC

When this svelte coupé was rolled out at the Geneva show, the all-woman design team garnered most of the attention, with much manly scoffing from the back row. But there's no denying the YCC (Your Concept Car) has the look. And given that the motor industry is so male-dominated, we find the YCC refreshingly unisex, less overt in its petrol worship, and more alive to the possibilities offered by product and fashion design. It helps that Eva-Lisa Andersson's nine-strong team has created one of the most attractive Volvos ever seen, a lissom, gull-winged body shell that abounds with neat design touches. ★ Jonathan Bell www.conceptlabvolvo.com